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 Call Managing Editor Gary Moseman,
 406-791-1465 or 800-438-6600,
 or e-mail the editorial board at
 tribletters@greatfalltribune.com

Viewpoints

DATE 3-3-11
 BY SB 69

Editorial board (our opinion)
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A Capitol idea: SB69 a worthy tribute to a great legislator

While opportunities for disagreement will abound in the next 81 days of the 2011

Montana Legislature, a hearing Friday features a bill that everyone can support.



Barданов

It is Senate Bill 69, whose purpose is straightforward — name the first floor of the Capitol's east wing for arguably the greatest legislator in the 121-year history of the state of Montana: Francis Barданов.

The law change itself is a single-line addition to the section of the Montana Code that authorizes specific commemorative plaques and statues in and around the

► Our opinion

Capitol.

But the bill, requested by the Capitol Complex Advisory Council and sponsored by Sen. Dave Wanzentried of Missoula, also includes a lengthy list of "whereas" statements outlining the life and career of Montana's most influential and second-longest-serving legislator.

As nice as they are, "whereases" can't do justice to the conscientious, hard-working, honest and humble man who anchored the Legislature for the better part of four decades.

role Barданов played in the evolution of the modern Legislature and in the year-to-year operation of the state.

Obviously before term limits began their every-eight-year purge of whatever expertise and seasoning our citizen-legislature can earn, Barданов's tenure ran 36 years from his first election in 1958 until his retirement at the end of 1994 — or 18 terms representing his House district in the Harlem area, where he farmed and ranched for his entire life.

For 10 of those terms, he chaired the powerful Appropriations Committee, and he did it with civility and respect for his colleagues.

He was the driving force behind creation of

the legislative staff structure that provides independent — as opposed to special interest — expertise to the lawmakers during their brief time in the Capitol.

His legislative interests ranged widely, but education, the environment and the institutions, including mental health, were high on his list of priorities.

Barданов was ahead of his time as a fiscal conservative and social progressive. Colleagues might have disagreed with him, but they never doubted his integrity. And despite his earthy humility — to our knowledge he never aspired politically to anything but representing his Harlem neighbors — they learned never to overlook him.



Hearing set

What: SB69 which would name the first floor east wing of the Capitol Building after longtime Harlem legislator Francis Barданов.
 When: 3 p.m. Friday in Room 335 of the Capitol.
 Who: Senate State Administration Committee.

On the occasion of Barданов's death in 2002, colleagues from both sides of the aisle were eager to praise him. "He treated everyone with the utmost respect," said state Sen. Dave Lewis, R-Helena, who

met Barданов while working on the governor's budget staff in 1973. "No one ever accused him of acting in any other way than in the best interests of the public. He was so highly principled."

We can think of no Montana legislator more deserving of the honor of having a part of the seat of Montana government named for him.

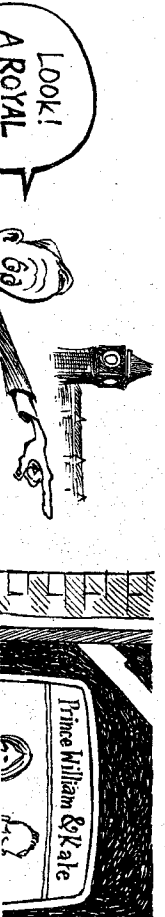
Contacted this week in Have about the legislation, his widow, Venus, provided a vintage Barданов reaction to the honoring legislation: After noting how special it would be for his large extended family and friends, she added with a nod to legislative reality: "If it goes, it's supposed to; if it doesn't go, it isn't supposed to." We hope it goes.

GUEST OPINION

Royal wedding trumps budget cuts

By KEVIN HARRIGAN

On the assumption that some version of Great Britain's fiscal austerity program eventually will show up in the United States, I have been studying up



GUEST OPINION

Year ends hopefully for religious freedom

The No. 1 religion story of

Senate Bill 69

E-mails and letters in support

Fagg, Russell to me
show details 1:24 PM (2 hours ago)

Good afternoon Dave:

Lt. Gov. Bohlinger called me wondering if I could support your bill honoring Francis Bardanouve, by naming the east wing of the first floor of the capital after him. I am happy to do so.

I served with Francis for two terms. He was a fiscally conservative Democrat, a gentleman in every sense of the word, a man of his word, and a man of great humility and integrity. He was respected and liked by both D's and R's.

Montana is a better place due to his service

One quick story: One time I proposed a bill to increase the tax on video gaming. Somehow it got out of committee. On the House floor it failed 4-95. Francis was one of the four. After the vote, I asked him why he had stuck with his vote when he knew it was going to fail miserably. He said:
"Because we should raise taxes on video gambling—it was the right thing to do."

That sums up a wonderful man.

Hope this passes,

Russell C. Fagg

+++++

, Michael to me
show details 2:31 PM (48 minutes ago)

Dear Sen. Wanzenried,

Thank you for contacting me regarding SB 69 - your bill to honor Rep. Francis Bardanouve. I feel fortunate to have served in the legislature with several giants of the institution, and Rep. Bardanouve was one of the foremost of all. He was practically an institution unto himself as the unchallenged master of the state budget. Despite his

legislative power and wide-ranging influence in the halls of the Capitol, Rep. Bardanouve conducted himself as a genuinely nice, humble person who would go out of his way to show kindness to fellow legislators, regardless of which side of the aisle they served or how long they had been there. For instance, I still keep a personal note he wrote to me after a Floor debate on a particular bill.

Regarding SB 69, I don't know if this is the best way to honor Rep. Bardanouve, but it is certainly a good way and I like the idea of the legislature taking special measures to honor noteworthy members of the past. As one of potentially many examples, SB 69 mentions Rep. Bardanouve's leadership in establishing the modern Legislative Council of today, and as I recall, former House Speaker Bob Marks was also instrumental in shaping the Legislative Council.

So, I support SB 69 and applaud you, Sen. Wanzenried, for taking the time to recognize one of the giants in the history of the Montana Legislature. Thank you.

Mike Foster

+++++

Fred Thomas to me
show details 5:48 PM (1 minute ago)

Senator Wanzenried,

It is a pleasure to write encouraging the passage of SB 69, legislation to Name the First Floor of the Capital Building after Rep Francis Bardanouve! What a great idea!

Here is the Gentleman legislator that every legislator should have gotten the chance to serve with. So shrewd, so intelligent, such a great political mind and yet so humble!

He really was dedicated, dedicated beyond all.

The guys like Thoft, Swysgood and Zook on approps can tell you a lot more stories than I can about Francis, you know Beaver-Bow and all, but in the end they loved him, respected him and would have done anything for him as he would have them.

I am so pleased to write encouraging your support for this bill!

Fred

Fred Thomas
Former State Senate Majority Leader
1004 South Burnt Fork Road
Stevensville, Mt 59870

+++++

John Cobb & Cheryl Lux & Cobb Charolais to me
show details 10:42 PM (9 hours ago)

SB 69 in front of Senate State Administration

Dear Senator:

I served with Rep. Bardanouve starting in 1985. With term limits it is hard to understand the power of the insight and the forcefulness people like he had by being in the legislature so long and how much he accomplished. . It was not just his history and knowledge of the legislature and government that made him important. He knew how Government worked, how the programs worked, how to build coalitions to get things done. He knew when to draw a line in the sand and when to raise his voice the few times he had to make his point clear. It took years of work and practice to make him such a good legislator in getting things done.

He represented the Legislature first. He sued or threatened (I can not remember for sure) to sue a Governor (Democrat) for trying to spend money without legislative authority. He voted to save the Fiscal Analyst Office when his own party and the Governor (who was Democrat) wanted it dissolved since it would not agree with certain budget numbers of the Governor.

Montana with close to over 1000 patients at Warm Springs, to over 1000 patients at Boulder, Rep. Bardanouve went down there himself to look out for them and began the process to de-institutionalize so many of these people.

He believed in tight budgets, but he had to work with both political parties, 150 legislators and thousands of Montanans as committee chairs must do, to find some common ground on spending. Look at the Chairs for Chairman of Appropriations. They have to have personalities to get along with appropriation members, their own party, the Governor and hundreds of other people and still make decisions that no one likes. People want to feel they had a fair shake with the Chair and that the Chair listened. I think Rep. Bardanouve tried to do that to the best of his ability.

At times I feel he felt there was too much spending, and at other times too little in certain areas but he had to make decisions and force others to make decisions to compromise and

he had to say No. He also had to force budget decisions that took into account long term implications.

One time a legislator found 4 million dollars (probably equivalent to 12 million today) to fund all waiting lists on the disability programs. Bardanouve thanked him and then took it all away. It was one time money and Bardanouve never wanted one time money for on going programs. He and Rep. Thoft and Rep. Swysgood used it elsewhere for one time projects across the state.

People could say he caused all this growth in government. He did not, the majorities of the Legislature representing their people and the Governors created this for good or for worse. But Rep. Bardanouve gave us the tools and controls for each legislature to make better decisions for their people and to make Government Accountable.

He was tight fisted and a conservative FDR Democrat. His vehicle outside the chambers was always an old vehicle that he had to tinker to get to work. He always knew where the cheapest motel room to stay in. He told my wife one time he did not know there was no heat in the room until it got way below freezing one night since he was there enough to notice except to sleep.

The Montana Legislature is an experiment. Can a Citizen legislature govern effectively? Can a Citizen Legislature hold government accountable? Can a Citizen legislature of 150 part time workers make decisions that will in the end be good for the people of Montana? Those questions are for each new Legislature to decide. As to paraphrase someone: can we make the best decisions – for when you assemble a number of people to have the advantage of their joint wisdom you inevitably assemble with those people, all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests and their selfish views. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected? No. But we all try to do the best we can and so did Rep. Bardanouve. No one likes voting for HB2, no one. But he had to assemble time and time again votes to pass that bill regardless of which party controlled the legislature.

If you get a chance, look who is on Long Range Planning. Usually they have on the committee the oldest serving members of appropriations and mostly conservative from both parties who try to do what is right for the entire state. People want a fair shake and Rep. Bardanouve gave a fair shake.

One can always say- well what about that other Legislator- he should also be recognized also. We have had many great Chairs of Appropriations, many great Chairs of other Committees. This bill should in no way take away from those people who have served so well. But this is the bill before you and now you must make a decision. Naming the first floor of the East Wing of the Capitol building in honor of a man who overcame great obstacles to become such a great person, who served actively in the legislature for so many years and made such a large impact on this state and the Legislature itself through the budget process, is an honor that we should perform.

Sincerely;

John Cobb
Former Montana legislator

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Remembrance of Francis Bardanouve from Senator Aubyn Curtiss, Fortine

I was fortunate to serve in the House of Representatives with Francis and I recall one 18 hour session of the House when he was so exhausted he actually went to sleep while resting on the steps leading up to the Speaker's podium. He was devoted to assuring that Montana lived within her means and I well remember one occasion when a budgetary emergency had been triggered. In frustration, as a freshman legislator, I moved that each department's budget be decreased by 5%. Francis thoughtfully spoke to the motion by explaining that some of the agencies could well get along with that much less, but those who were most frugal and operated most responsibly would be penalized.

Regardless of how heated the debate, Francis Bardanouve was always a gentleman and a role model for those whose responsibilities are to craft a balanced budget for our state.

LORENTS GROSFIELD

285 Grosfield Lane
Big Timber, MT 59011-7724
Phone/Fax: 406-537-4489
Email: lorents@mcn.net

January 13, 2011

Senate State Administration Committee
State Capitol
Helena, Montana

Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am pleased to support Senator Wanzenried's SB 69, a tribute to Rep. Francis Bardanouve. I would guess that few (if any) could think of a person more deserving of this small tribute.

I served two sessions in the Senate while Francis was still in the House. Although he was tough and a little liberal for my taste on some issues, he was a pillar, a pillar of modesty, a pillar of concern and determination for the good of Montana as he saw it, and a pillar of working hard, very hard, to that end. And all that continuously in a very long and distinguished legislative career.

What more can Montanans ask of their representatives? Maybe a sense of humor? That trait he also possessed and it should have been included in one of the Whereas's.

I am proud to have known him, and to have served with him. His legacy is deserving of this tribute, and this remembrance.

I hope you'll support SB 69.

Sincerely,



Lorents Grosfield

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